

Appl. No. 10/032,949
Amdt. dated October 18, 2005
Reply to Office action of July 28, 2005

Docket No. 10416-18

REMARKS

1. Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103(a) – Claims 1, 3, 17, 18, and 20

Claims 1-20 are pending in the present application and were rejected in the Office action dated May 7, 2004 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Estakhri et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,835,935) and in view of Konishi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,579,502). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. However, in order to provide clarification, claims 1, 3, 17, 18, and 20 have been amended. Claims 1, 17, and 20 are independent claims. Claim 3 depends from independent claim 1; and claim 18 depends from independent claim 17. For brevity, only the bases for the rejection of the independent claims are traversed in detail on the understanding that the dependent claims are also patentably distinct over the cited references, as they depend directly from their respective independent claims. Nevertheless, the dependent claims include additional features that, in combination with those of their respective independent claims, provide further, separate, and independent bases for patentability.

The Examiner has stated, "Estakhri et al. discloses a memory controller 200 for accessing a memory 212 having a plurality of blocks (clusters) each constituted of a plurality of pages (sectors) based on a host address supplied from a host computer." The Examiner further states, "Estakhri also discloses writing means for writing user data to the target page and writing start page data to a redundant area." The Examiner continues, stating that the "start page data from the redundant areas of all pages is also recorded in the management table 144."

However, the Examiner admits, "Estakhri does not disclose decision means for determining whether progressive data writing for writing user data to a target page is possible, wherein the decision means make the determination based on start page data." Nevertheless, the Examiner states, "Konishi et al. discloses searching a management table for a free block in a memory to write data to." Finally, the Examiner asserted that "[i]t would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to add a 'free block' flag to the table of Estakhri et al. and to integrate the free block table searching procedure of Konishi et al. in order to facilitate the finding of free sectors within the memory when computer updates are being applied to the memory clusters."

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Nevertheless, the Estakhri et al. and Konishi et al. patents do not teach or suggest each and every element of the invention as claimed in claims 1, 3, 17, 18, and 20, either alone or in combination. In this regard, the Estakhri et al. and Konishi et al. patents do not teach or suggest a memory controller that includes:

(1) search means for searching, based on start page data written in a redundant area of a block including a target page designated by the host address, a number of a start page of the block where the start page indicates a page, a preceding page thereof not being a free page and all following pages among the pages included in the corresponding block being free pages; and

(2) wherein the decision means makes the decision that progressive data writing is possible if the number of the target page is equal to or greater than that of the start page.

Thus, the Estakhri et al. and Konishi et al. patents do not teach or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention, either alone or in combination. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 1, 3, 17, 18, and 20 as unpatentable over Estakhri et al. in view of Konishi et al. has been overcome.

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CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest and bona fide effort to clarify the issues before the Examiner and to place this case in condition for allowance. In view of the foregoing discussions, it is believed clear that the differences between the claimed invention and the cited references are such that the claimed invention is patentably distinct over the cited references. Therefore, consideration and allowance of claims 1, 3, 17, 18, and 20 is believed to be in order, and an early Notice of Allowance to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner should have any questions concerning the foregoing, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at (310) 712-8319. The undersigned attorney can normally be reached Monday through Friday from about 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM Pacific Time.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 18, 2005


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